



A young visitor adding to the biodiversity of the EcoLab; admission for children 17 & under is free thanks to Central Maine Power.

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243 Washington Street, Bath, Maine 04530  
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# The Rhumb Line

Spring/Summer 2023 Number 97

## A Closer Look at Inspiration



by Christopher Timm  
Executive Director

Photo: Tim Greenway

It was the act of inviting the community in—listening to what maritime stories they themselves valued—that gave us our start.

It began with a book project. Mark Hennessy—an artist, journalist, and historian—interviewed scores of Bath residents to document the maritime stories that they *themselves* had, or valued. This project expanded into another bold idea—to have a physical location for people to explore related maritime artifacts, all loaned by the community. A temporary “Bath Marine Museum” opened in a defunct furniture store on Centre Street, with a crowd-funded lease of \$65 a month. Inspired by this trial run, Camilla Sewall Edge, a member of a prominent Bath shipbuilding family, offered up a permanent location that would serve the museum for its next 30 years. During this move, workers from Bath Iron Works—including the president himself—provided the truck and heavy lifting.

Stories like this flow throughout our entire history, through each major expansion and achievement. The lobsterman, “Bunny” Zahn, who helped preserve sections of the schooner *Cora F. Cressy*. The Smith family, who bought and held the Percy & Small Shipyard until the museum was in a position to open it to visitors. Our scope has evolved and expanded over the decades as more people have gotten involved.

So from our perspective, it is not only a joy, but a responsibility to find ways to give back to this community, and to invite new perspectives in. Which is why initiatives like Free Admission weekends from January to March are so important to us. Generously sponsored by Bath Savings, this initiative resulted in attendance over the quiet winter months rivaling those from the summer.

I am so appreciative of everyone who has shared how meaningful this was to them. From the dad who had not been to the museum in 20 years, but heard about *SeaChange*—he and his three kids planned an hour-long visit but ended up spending the rest of the day crafting their own sea creatures in the EcoLab. Or the individual, delighted to stumble upon a never-before-seen photograph of a relative in *Women Behind the Lens*. Or the neighbor, who had never visited the museum because “I didn’t think a maritime museum would interest me,” and actually found profound connections to their everyday life. That person has since become a member.

In our Spring 2020 *Rhumb Line*, I shared the rallying



Museum members and special guests enjoying an exclusive first-look at *Women Behind the Lens* at the opening reception.

cry of Maynard Brichford, a prominent archivist, who in 1979 implored cultural institutions to remember “we are keepers for a purpose and that purpose is not ‘keeping’ but using.” Museum leaders since have approached this call to action in new ways. A visitor-centered museum. A participatory museum. Here at Maine Maritime Museum, we must always find new ways to invite our community in. Not because it is fashionable or required, but because it is our identity. It has been from the start.

Over the next few months, we will be engaged in refreshing our strategic plan and reenergizing around our mission, vision, and values. I and other members of our team value hearing your thoughts. What inspires you to be involved here? What maritime stories are meaningful or inspiring to you? How can the museum welcome you aboard?

Please share these with me at [ctimm@maritimeme.org](mailto:ctimm@maritimeme.org). I would love the opportunity to hear them!

### Current Exhibits

#### ***Women Behind the Lens***

***The Photography of Emma D. Sewall, Josephine Ginn Banks, and Abbie F. Minott***

Opened December 2022

Featuring Maine-based photographers from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

#### ***SeaChange: Darkness and Light in the Gulf of Maine***

in partnership with Gulf of Maine EcoArts

Opened February 2023

A site-specific, immersive art and ecology experience.





# Maine Maritime Museum celebrates Maine's vibrant maritime culture.

## Rhumb Line

A line on the earth's surface which intersects all meridians and parallels of latitude at the same angle. A line of constant course is a rhumb line.

## Meet the Team



**Chris Jacobs**, *Director of Finance*, comes to the museum from Your Part-Time Controller, an accounting firm specializing in nonprofits. Growing up in the suburbs of New York City, he was lucky enough to spend his summers on Southport Island in Maine. There, he developed a love for sailing and Midcoast Maine. After Dartmouth College and an MBA from New York University, he spent 20 years as a CPA in the financial services industry in New York City, working at KPMG Peat Marwick and Lehman Brothers. Chris and his wife, Anne, moved with their two sons to Yarmouth, Maine, where he spent the next 16 years teaching high school math at Thornton Academy in Saco, before returning to accounting. He is active in the Southport Yacht Club and enjoys racing Rhodes 19 and other sailboats. When he is not on the water, he loves hiking in the Maine mountains.

**Tom Doyle**, *Staff Accountant*, comes to us from Wheaton College in Norton, Massachusetts, where he majored in economics and minored in business and math. Before joining the team at the museum, Tom spent his summers working on a lobster boat in Casco Bay. A lifelong Mainer, he still enjoys being on the water, especially in the summer.



**Timm Donohue**, *Special Events & Venue Coordinator*, comes to us from Asheville, North Carolina. He has spent the past decade working in the music industry where he gained a variety of expertise as an Artist Manager and Touring Coordinator. While working in the arts, he developed a passion for helping people make their goals and ideas a reality. Timm and his partner started a family in Bath and strive to contribute to the local community here on the Kennebec River. He spends his free time exploring the Maine coast, gardening, and listening to music.



## Around the Museum



Behind the scenes of the installation of *SeaChange: Darkness and Light in the Gulf of Maine*, in partnership with Gulf of Maine EcoArts.



Dayne Dennett, IT Specialist, and Catherine Cyr, Exhibition Coordinator, review a few improvements to *BIW: Building America's Navy* as part of a spring refresh.





Linwood Snow (middle), Maine Maritime Museum's first Executive Director, receives the Capt. W. J. Lewis Parker Award from Executive Director Chris Timm (left), and Curator Emeritus Nathan Lipfert (right).



Our Visitor Service Assistants, VSAs are some of our most experienced and versatile staff; they must know the campus inside and out, and be able to respond at a moment's notice to help a staff member, assist a visitor in need, or provide coverage to other volunteers, including our Donnell House docents and Percy & Small Shipyard tour guides.

Back row left to right: Mark Lincicome, Warren Geier, Russ Pierson, John Haile, Jeff Cannon. Front row left to right: Ray Hender, Judi Mansfield, Roger Barras (not pictured: Jon Anderson).



This winter, in addition to Free Admission Weekends sponsored by Bath Savings, two new exhibition openings, and multiple STEAMbox Workshops, we also held a brand-new tasting and shopping event in partnership with Long Reach Kitchen and Catering: Movers, Shakers, and Makers: Women in Hospitality, Craft Beverage, & the Arts.

Credit: The Cultivated Thread





by Kurt Spiridakis  
Director of Watercraft

Current Boatbuilding Projects

Five Islands Skiff

This 14' rowboat is an adaption of item number 81.064 in the museum's watercraft collection. The Five Islands skiff was designed and built by local Fred Rittal, primarily for residents of Malden Island in Georgetown. Originating in the early 1900s, this vessel is typical of the small rowboats summer residents used to ferry their families between the islands before the advent of outboards and internal combustion engines.



Working on the Five Islands skiff in the Watercraft Restoration Center.

Volunteers have completed the backbone and are close to bending frames, the last step before planking starts. Monitor work-in-progress by visiting the Watercraft Restoration Center, our new watercraft-focused exhibit space set to be open daily later this spring.

Yankee Tender Commission

Late last summer, a couple stopped in looking to buy one of our student-built Yankee Tender skiffs. Unfortunately, we had sold out, so we offered to build a new one and they accepted. This particular model will have a horseshoe-shaped seating area at the stern and a bracket for a new five horsepower outboard.

Discovery Boatbuilding



Students getting up-close to the milling process, right here on campus.

Our Discovery Boatbuilding class of 2023 comes from a broader range and scope of grades and schools than ever before: 71 students, spanning grades 5 – 12, spread over five schools. This is our first year working with the TREK Program of Brunswick, formerly the REAL School. This year, we've also branched out from our traditional boatbuilding curriculum. Students from TREK and Georgetown are building outdoor furniture to accompany outdoor classroom adaptations developed during the pandemic. This is a "tree to turf" event, with students learning about and milling lumber for the furniture on the museum's sawmill—special thanks to trustee John Morse for donating the logs!

As always, we are still building traditional Maine skiffs, and from the fleet of six boats that students will launch in June, three will be available for purchase this summer.



Current Exhibitions



by Catherine Cyr  
Exhibition Coordinator

This year, visitors to Maine Maritime Museum can explore two fascinating and informative special exhibitions—and they could not be more distinct.

*Women Behind the Lens: The Photography of Emma D. Sewall, Josephine Ginn Banks, and Abbie F. Minott* chronicles the life and work of three female photographers from the turn of the 20th century who captured striking images of maritime communities. *SeaChange: Darkness and Light in the Gulf of Maine*, on the other hand, is an interdisciplinary, contemporary art and natural science exhibition that introduces guests to the wonders of Cashes Ledge, a unique underwater mountain range 85 miles off the coast of Portland.

The differences between the two exhibitions are truly extensive. *Women Behind the Lens* is the product of research and scholarship produced by museum staff and volunteers, while *SeaChange* is a collaborative exhibition spearheaded by a local artists' collective, Gulf of Maine EcoArts. The former prominently displays museum collections and archival materials, the latter features newly created murals, sculpture, and media. One is the museum's first exhibitions to feature historic photography produced solely by women, and the other is the first to be composed of multiple site-specific art installations. And while *Women Behind the Lens* distinctly looks to the past as a means for better understanding Maine's maritime heritage, *SeaChange* looks decidedly to the future.

But for all these apparent differences, this breadth was intentional. Together, the two exhibitions highlight the extensive range of topics we can explore as a maritime museum, as well as our commitment to propelling our mission forward in innovative ways. They both represent the critical social and civil responsibilities of our institution and our role in educating and nurturing dialogue surrounding diverse and difficult topics. These exhibitions respectively bring to light the



At the heart of *SeaChange* stands a 16-foot wooden mountain symbolizing the tallest peak in Cashes Ledge—Ammen Rock. This peak ascends 720 feet in real life and comes within just 30 feet of the ocean's surface. The exhibition's mountain is heavily surrounded by kelp and various species of fish and plankton, much like the actual version. Visitors can further immerse themselves in the wonders of Cashes Ledge via the projection room behind the mountain that plays video footage captured by divers and scientists exploring the area.



*Women Behind the Lens* plays with the scale of some of its featured photographs to allow guests to interact with them in more nuanced ways. Seen here is an image taken by Josephine Ginn Banks, who brought her camera to the launching of the SS *Roosevelt* in 1905, documenting the early life of the history-making vessel that would later bring explorer Robert E. Peary to the Arctic.

underrepresented history of women within maritime industries and engage in discussions surrounding climate change and environmental stewardship.

It is not a coincidence that these exhibitions developed in tandem and on the heels of the important work of recent shows such as *Cotton Town: Maine's Economic Connections to Slavery* and *Sustaining Maine's Waters*. We know from feedback that visitors of all ages are eager to learn more about complex issues and untold histories at our museum. As I continue to dive into my role as exhibition coordinator here at the museum, I look forward to curating many more compelling exhibitions that inspire visitors to think broadly about the scope of Maine's maritime heritage and future. What maritime stories are meaningful to you?



Thank you to these first-time Annual Fund donors who made their first gift in 2022!

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New Business Partners are listed in **RED**.  
Visit [MaineMaritimeMuseum.org](http://MaineMaritimeMuseum.org) for a full list of Business Partners.

We cannot emphasize enough how much the support of our Business Partners means to the museum. These loyal corporate members, hailing from down the street and across the state, show commitment to the museum and the community through their annual memberships and beyond. In this edition of *The Rhumb Line*, we are highlighting the Business Partners who joined at the Quarterdeck level and above. Their yearly membership provides support for all we do here including summer camps, exhibitions, Kennebec River cruises, collections care, traditional maritime skills education, school field trips, historical building maintenance, and more!

If you work at one of these companies, we appreciate you! If you frequent any of these businesses, please feel free to mention that you noticed they are Business Partners at the museum—because their membership makes a difference in *your* visit experience!



Upcoming Events

Lighthouse and Nature Cruises

The best way to enjoy Midcoast Maine’s beautiful scenery is from the water. Board our comfortable cruise boat *Merrymeeting* for one of our daily narrated cruises. Enjoy the area’s abundant wildlife, see lobstermen at work hauling traps, and get an up-close look at up to 10 of Maine’s most iconic lighthouses... all in one trip!

Summer Cruise Schedule

Cruise	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Shipyard & Lighthouses (1 hr.)	12 2	12 2	12 2	12 2	12 2	12 2	12 2
Midcoast Lights and Rivers (3 hrs.)	3:30	3:30	3:30	3:30			
Six Rivers of Merrymeeting Bay (3 hrs.)							3:30
Lighthouse Lovers (4 hrs.)						3:30	

Fall Cruise Schedule

Cruise	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Shipyard & Lighthouses (1 hr.)	12 2	12 2	12 2	12 2	12 2	12 2	12 2
Autumn Lights Cruise (2 hrs.)	3:30	3:30	3:30	3:30		3:30	

To view complete cruise descriptions and book your tickets, scan this code or visit *MaineMaritimeMuseum.org*



SeaChange Series

In-person lectures and panels in conjunction with *SeaChange: Darkness and Light in the Gulf of Maine*

6:00 pm in Long Reach Hall, free, preregistration is required

**May 25 | Panel Discussion**  
Youth in Environmental Justice/Shaping Conservation Policy

**June 8 | Lecture**  
The Future of Maine’s Fisheries: Giving Fishermen a Voice

**July 12 | Panel Discussion**  
Building Sustainability in Maine’s Blue Economy in the Gulf of Maine

**August 24 | Panel Discussion**  
Mental Health for Changing Coastal Communities

**October 19 | Panel Discussion**  
Wabanaki Environmental Conservation and Land Reclamation Initiatives

**November 16 | Panel Discussion**  
Local Ecological Knowledge: Maine’s Fishing Communities and Changing Waters

**December 7 | Lecture**  
The Food Web Ecology of Fisheries in Cashes Ledge

Annual Events

**May 20 | Community Day | 10:00 am – 2:00 pm**  
The official start of the season with free admission, discounted cruises, plus demonstrations, guided tours & more!

**July 14 | Maine Maritime Museum Annual Gala | 5:00 – 10:00 pm**  
Join us in the Percy & Small Shipyard for one incredible evening to celebrate Maine Maritime Museum and support everything we’ve mentioned in this issue & beyond! This special event will feature live and silent auctions, music, dancing, dinner by Churchill Events, and more.

**September 9 | Pints on the Pier 4:00 – 7:30 pm**  
Our sixth annual beer fest and concert, with food trucks, lawn games, and a beautiful view of the sun setting on the Kennebec.



Two Pints attendees enjoying a giant block set built by our Boatshop!



## Volunteer News



by **Connie Hartley,**  
Volunteer Program Manager

### Annual Volunteer Breakfast

On Wednesday, March 8, we welcomed our volunteers back for the Annual Volunteer Breakfast to kick off the season with 120 in attendance, including trustees and staff. This year, we were fortunate enough to have General Dynamics - Bath Iron Works President Chuck Krugh as our guest speaker, accompanied by Vice President Dave Clark and Communications Director Julie Rabinowitz.



Bill Haggett, former BIW CEO and museum Trustee Emeritus, with Chuck Krugh, and Chris Timm.

To start, Executive Director Chris Timm welcomed everyone and celebrated the past, present, and future partnerships between Bath Iron Works and Maine Maritime Museum.

The Bath Iron Works Story: By Land and Sea is one of our most popular attractions. And from Maine Maritime Museum's perspective, BIW is such a physical reminder that for every story that we can tell with our collection, there is a companion story playing out today, right before our eyes.

Chuck has a unique background for a BIW president, coming from the aerospace industry. He shared compelling reflections on the manufacturing commonalities across these industries. A lesson learned in his career that he looks forward to applying at BIW is the importance of on-the-job education and leadership training. We share this common goal in supporting and training our volunteers for success here at the museum. During Chuck's presentation, BIW retirees who now volunteer at the museum were recognized, including the BIW Tour Guides.

Bill Haggett, a former BIW CEO and a museum Trustee Emeritus was in attendance and thanked Chuck for his interest in the future of BIW and in Maine Maritime Museum, and for taking time out of his busy schedule to join us.

During the event Linwood Snow, the museum's first Executive Director, a long-time historian, and current library volunteer, presented Chuck with two books he authored, *Bath Iron Works, The First Hundred Years* and *A Shipyard in Maine*, cowritten with Captain Douglas Lee.

### 2023 Volunteer Council Representatives

**Ellen Whiting**, Council Chair  
**Roger Barras**, Percy & Small Shipyard  
Tour Guides  
**Phil Blauvelt**, Maintenance  
**John Briley**, Launch Tank  
**Craig Collins**, *Mary E* Docents  
**John Cotton**, Boatshop  
**Reta King**, Greeters

**Russ Pierson**, Visitor Service Assistants  
**Martha Reifschneider**, Gallery Docents  
**Linwood Snow**, Curatorial & Library  
**Mary Schreiber**, Donnell House Docents  
**Jeff Tarbox**, Bath Iron Works: By Land  
and Sea Tour Guides  
**Bruce Ward**, Blacksmith Shop

## Boatshop Workshops

### Workshop: Adirondack Chair | July 22, 10:00 am – 3:30 pm

*Adults, \$275; members receive a 20% discount*

Our historic shipyard on the banks of the Kennebec River serves as a delightful backdrop for a one-day class! The iconic Adirondack chair, built from lightweight and durable cedar, comes together quickly and easily under the supervision of Boatshop staff. Hundreds of these chairs have been built at the museum by all ages and skill levels—no experience is necessary and all tools, jigs, and materials are provided! Bring a lunch or grab a bite from the Sail Shed. Don't miss this popular summer workshop!

### Workshop: Shaker Boxes | December 6 & 7, 5:00 – 8:00 pm

*Adults, \$130; members receive a 20% discount*

The Shakers are renowned for their traditional and simple furniture design and practical inventions. We build nesting Shaker boxes in the Boatshop because they are beautiful, handy, and employ small boatbuilding techniques like steam bending and clinch nailing. Two evenings are all it takes to build three boxes from cherry and cedar. Students have built over 500 boxes over the past 15 years in this accessible, yet challenging, class. All materials are provided and no experience is necessary.



This little stool is perfect next to the fireplace or could even be a beautiful plant stand!

### Workshop: Fireside Stool

**July 26 & 27, 3:00 – 6:00 pm or  
November 1 & 2, 5:00 – 8:00 pm**

*Adults, \$124; members receive a 20% discount*

Our three-legged fireside stool is simple, yet elegant. It's a great introduction to woodworking—in fact, it is the first project every student undertakes in our Discovery Boatbuilding program. Comprised of three octagonal legs that are fastened with wedged, kerfed through-tenons, this stool is a great introduction to boatbuilding techniques on a smaller scale. No woodworking (or boatbuilding) experience necessary!

### Workshop: Toboggan | December 13 & 20, 5:00 – 8:00 pm

*Price per group: \$400*

Back by popular demand, this winter, join us in the Boatshop to build your own classic wooden toboggan! This class is open to five total groups of up to three people per group. Each group will build an eight-foot toboggan over two evenings using boatbuilding techniques like steam bending, riveting, and ropework. No experience is required and all materials provided. Note: this design meets specifications of the U.S. National Toboggan Championships held annually in Camden.



# Stewards of Stories



by **Samantha Sauer**  
Director of Curatorial Affairs

Last fall, shortly after moving to Maine from Illinois, I was lucky to enjoy a conversation with Jack Henderson of Phippsburg. Jack shared that recently he had been reading, over breakfast, an issue of *The Working Waterfront*, a publication by the Island Institute. While turning the page, he spotted, with surprise, a photograph of his father! The photo was part of an article by the museum's very own Kelly Page, Collections and Library Services Manager. Developed from a 35mm slide, the image features a bundled-up Bernard Henderson ice fishing near his smelt shack on the Sasanoa River in 1962. The image, along with other material, was donated to the museum by Jack. Struck by his discovery, Jack stopped by the Nathan R. Lipfert Research Library to share his excitement in seeing the photograph, as well as his gratitude in the knowledge that material donated remained safe and sound. The joy in his voice and the impact of our conversation stayed with me long after he left the library.

Since joining the team in September, I have been welcomed to Maine Maritime Museum with kindness and enthusiasm. Much like my chat with Jack, I've been fortunate to enjoy good conversations with visitors, volunteers, staff, and other passionate community members about museum collections and exhibitions. Our conversations have fueled my appreciation and understanding of Maine Maritime Museum. It's clear: much good work has been done, and there is much good work to continue. Importantly, our current and future curatorial work and research is made possible due to a firm foundation of scholarship and support developed over six decades. Through mindful collections stewardship, innovative interdisciplinary scholarship, and dynamically engaging exhibitions, our Curatorial team collaborates with many to seek out, safeguard, and share inclusive and accessible maritime stories to spark conversation, inspire connection, and cultivate community. This mission-critical work engages the public while, importantly, also upholding the public's trust.

Studies consistently highlight both the value and the responsibility of museums on local and global scales. A core aspect of museum accountability is that a museum serves as a good steward of resources held in the public trust. In 2021, the American Alliance of Museums (AAM) released a report analyzing the impact and role of public trust titled *Museums and Trust 2021*. The AAM noted that "[t]he public continues to regard museums as highly trustworthy—ranking second only to friends and family." Respondents ranked museums as significantly more trustworthy than researchers and scientists, non-governmental organizations generally, news organizations, the government, corporations and businesses, and social media. The report went on to note that, "[f]or respondents who had visited a museum in the past two years...museums are the number one trusted source of information." Additional key findings



Team Curatorial after de-installing *Shipwrecks & Salvage*. Left to right: Marilyn Hinkley, Nancy Wilkes, volunteer & museum Trustee), Kelly Page, Catherine Cyr, Selena McGonnell, and Samantha Sauer

from the report (and excellent summarizing slides and visuals) may be found on the AAM website.

While national studies conducted by leading organizations are invaluable, public trust is perhaps most deeply felt and recognized on local and institutional levels. At Maine Maritime Museum, we know the value and importance of the public trust in our daily work and scholarship. We see this in the critical support from members, donors, partners, and more. We understand this in reviewing formal and informal feedback, including comments shared in the guest book in Sewall Hall. We feel this in casual one-on-one conversations and in witnessing emotional responses to exhibitions, programs, and research discoveries.

In many ways, my conversation with Jack highlighted many aspects of what our Curatorial team at Maine Maritime Museum does—we collect, preserve, and share collections. In answering this professional calling, we are trusted by the public, by our community, with your stories. In short: we serve as stewards of stories. Thank you for the warm welcome and sharing your stories so far. As I continue to get my sea legs in Bath, I do so standing on the shoulders of many, and I am eager to continue to learn, listen, and advance this critical work and scholarship. I look forward to many more good conversations moving ahead!



# Curatorial Best Practices in Action



by **Kelly Page**  
Collections and Library Services Manager

A core function of a museum is to display and interpret materials. Collections of specimens, historic material culture, contemporary art, and archaeological finds can be found at institutions with wide-ranging missions, each with passionate curatorial teams serving as stewards of the items in their care. To be a proper steward, there are guidelines that collections professionals aspire to follow. In addition to our ongoing work, several recent curatorial activities demonstrate Maine Maritime Museum’s commitment to the core principles of collections stewardship.

First and foremost, **we collect items that are appropriate to our mission** and provide access to them. These items are used for exhibitions and educational programming that further support the mission. Both collections and interpretive activities are developed to meet the needs of the institution and its audiences. Collaboration with the Curatorial team is essential in developing educational programs, such as the RSU 1 Sense of Place, which draws on object-based learning to make connections to maritime heritage. Maine College of Art + Design students also recently accessed collections for research and to draw inspiration for their own contemporary art pieces.

**We care for collections** by providing secure storage in appropriate environments. Conditions are assessed, risks are planned for, and restorative action is taken as needed. Five paintings have recently received conservation treatment, with funding from the Charles E. Burden Collections Stewardship Fund and the E. Rhodes & Leona B. Carpenter Foundation. Additionally, the museum has a pending application to the National Endowment for the Humanities’ Preservation and Access grant program to support evaluations of collections storage environments.

**We document collections** to record where they came from, contextualize historical significance, and increase accessibility. An Institute of Museum and Library Services grant project continues to inventory, image, and expand descriptive catalog information. Curatorial staff and volunteers are also working to digitize and upload paper collections files in order to centralize information in our database.

Finally, **we hold ourselves accountable**. We continuously evaluate our procedures, enhance our skillsets through professional development, and make plans for standards-based improvements. As a testament to our commitment to excellence, we

By following these curatorial best practices, we ensure that our collections are properly cared for and accessible to all who wish to learn from them.

are proud to participate in the voluntary accreditation program offered by the American Alliance of Museums (AAM), the largest professional organization setting standards in the museum field. Furthermore, we are excited to be accepted into the 2023 cohort for AAM’s Museum Assessment Program which focuses on specific areas of operation. We will be participating in the Collections Stewardship category.

By following these curatorial best practices, we ensure that our collections are properly cared for and accessible to all who wish to learn from them. Our dedicated curatorial team is excited to support the mission of Maine Maritime Museum, and its standing as a world-class institution.

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# Finding New Perspectives on Maine Maritime Museum’s Collection



by Sarah Timm  
Director of Education



An early studio assignment asked students to design and create a three-dimensional sculpture from cardboard. Pictured here is Mac Craig’s interpretation of the Two Light Fresnel lens

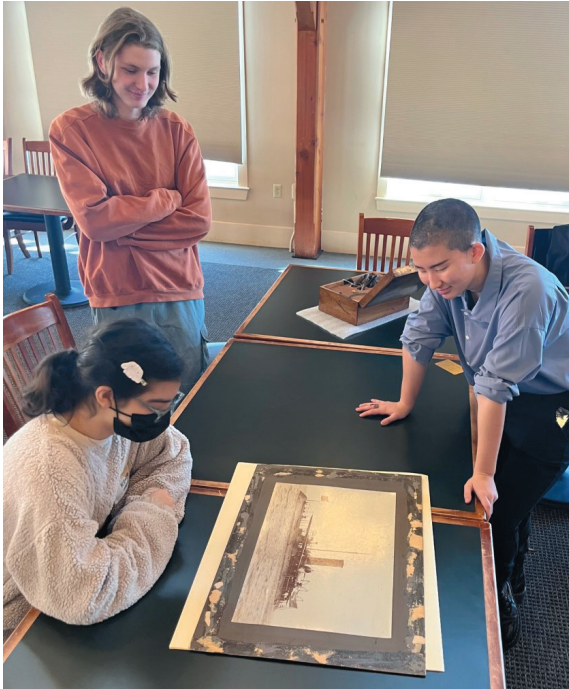
This spring, I have been co-teaching the course The Boundless Deep: Maritime Inspired Making, at Maine College of Art + Design, intended to introduce academic research into students’ creative practice. As part of the curriculum, each student chose an artifact from our collection to research Maine’s maritime history and to serve as creative inspiration for a body of studio work. I knew these students would be creative, but I was amazed by their ability to find new interpretive avenues that can enrich our understanding of these artifacts and the stories they tell. Take for example, the Fresnel lens of the Two Lights east tower in Cape Elizabeth, currently featured in the exhibit *Into the Lantern: A Lighthouse Experience*. After researching the mechanics and modernization of Fresnel lenses, Mac Craig, ‘26, found inspiration in the rigid pattern of light and glass in contrast to the wild raging sea it attempts to control. Mac’s cardboard mockup envelops the lens with the

intertwining and chaotic tentacles of a kraken, the fantastic creature representing centuries of sailor anxieties. These contrasting patterns—consistency and chaos—offer a witty take on a traditional understanding of lighthouses as a beacon of hope and stability.

Hope Uribe, ‘26, chose to research a photograph of the U.S.S. *Katahdin* (built at Bath Iron Works in 1893 and commissioned in 1897), only to find a dearth of resources in official naval records. Why, they asked, was this history largely ignored? The U.S.S. *Katahdin* was an experimental battering ram; however, its steam engines were unable to reach the necessary speed to cause significant damage to enemy ships. It served less than a year before being decommissioned. As Hope expanded their research to other naval vessels with robust histories, they encountered a challenge on par with the *Katahdin*’s limited history—the heavy use of jargon in naval descriptions restricts comprehension to insiders. In a sketch inspired by their research notes, Hope uses the written word as a visual effect to spotlight the inaccessible language used in maritime histories. In their piece, the story of the U.S.S. *John F. Kennedy* begins at the top left and continues in bold letters across the page.



Second-Order Fresnel Lens from Two Lights east tower, Cape Elizabeth.



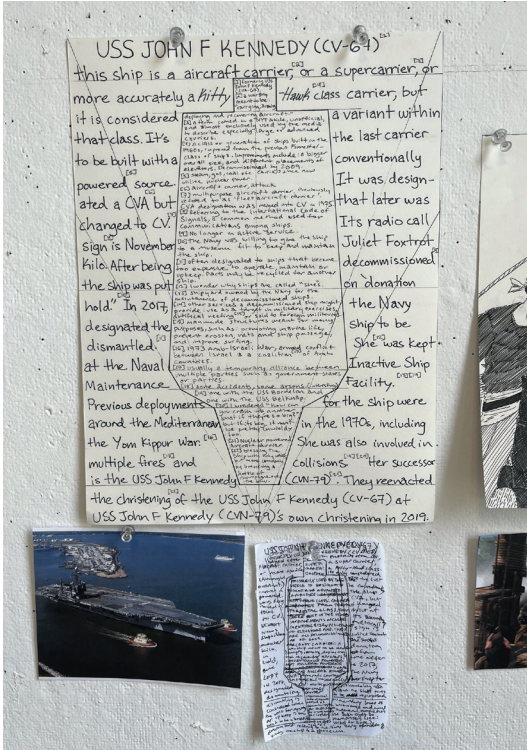
Hope views their research artifact, a photograph of the USS *Katahdin*, for the first time. The class traveled to the museum to view their research artifacts up close and learn more about museum collections and archival research from Education and Curatorial staff.

maritime stories. The words we choose and the narratives we create will shape how people interpret and connect to them in the future. My experience working and learning from these students has reaffirmed my belief in the power of our collection to keep Maine’s maritime stories relevant, and therefore alive. But here is the funny thing about relevancy—it can be interpreted any number of ways. By giving access and opportunity for a new generation to discover and reinterpret Maine Maritime Museum’s collection, however different from our own, we ensure that its stories continue to be told.

Maine Maritime Museum will be debuting student work completed in this course in an exhibit opening summer 2023.

By the end of the first line, we already encounter three annotations, representing Hope’s attempts to decode the language of American naval classifications. As we move down the page, the annotations become more intrusive until they overtake the reader’s attention entirely and begin to take the contour shape of the vessel they describe. The explanation of the story is now the story itself. Hope’s reflection on this opaque language extends to the discipline of maritime history itself. It begs the question, “Who are these histories written for?”

This is an important question for those of us charged with preserving



Hope’s idea board featuring their word-sketch of the U.S.S. *John F. Kennedy* (top), research notes (bottom right), and a photo of an aircraft carrier (bottom left).